

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to the Taliban

July 17, 2000

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the

Taliban (Afghanistan) that was declared in Executive Order 13129 of July 4, 1999.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
July 17, 2000.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 18.

Statement on Proposed Marriage Penalty Tax Relief Legislation

July 18, 2000

While I strongly support targeted marriage penalty relief, the marriage penalty bill put forth by the majority in Congress is one part of a fiscally irresponsible, poorly targeted, and regressive tax plan. If this strategy succeeds, more benefits will go to the top one percent of taxpayers than to the bottom 80 percent of all Americans, while ignoring tax cuts I have proposed for college tuition, long-term care, savings, and child care. By itself, I would veto this bill. In the spirit of bipartisanship, however,

I am willing to accept marriage penalty relief on this scale if Congress passes a plan that preserves the Medicare surplus to pay down the debt and passes a plan that gives real, voluntary Medicare prescription drug coverage that is available and affordable for all seniors. This is the best way to break the partisan logjam and help the tens of millions of older Americans across this country who face rising prescription drug costs.

Statement on the Japan-United States Agreement on Interconnection Rates

July 18, 2000

This important agreement on interconnection rates will help further reduce regulatory barriers to trade between the United States and Japan. It will level the playing field for America's cutting edge technologies and increase the number of Japanese consumers connected to the

Internet. It's a win-win for the United States and Japan and represents an important step as we prepare to discuss the impact of information technology on the global economy at the G-7/G-8 summit.

July 18 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

Statement on the Death of Senator Paul Coverdell

July 18, 2000

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of Senator Paul Coverdell.

Paul Coverdell spent a lifetime serving the people of Georgia and our country. He was a tireless advocate who worked to ensure that children have access to quality education. And he was a leader in America's war against drugs. As Director of the Peace Corps, he proudly

carried America's spirit of volunteerism around the world.

I join all Americans in honoring Paul Coverdell for his years of service as a soldier, a public servant, and a statesman. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife, Nancy, his family, and his many friends.

Remarks on the Middle East Peace Summit and an Exchange With Reporters in Thurmont, Maryland

July 20, 2000

The President. As all of you know, for the past 9 days we have been engaged in the most comprehensive and thorough negotiations ever between Palestinians and Israelis on the core issues of their 52-year conflict. The two parties have been making an intensive effort to resolve their differences over the most difficult issues. The gaps remain substantial, but there has been progress, and we must all be prepared to go the extra mile.

After a round of intensive consultations this evening, the parties agreed to stay at Camp David while I travel to Okinawa for the G-8 summit. Mr. Lockhart will be able to fill you in on the details of how this occurred. I have to take the plane, and I'm running late, but I do want him to explain what happened.

During the time I am gone, Secretary Albright will be working with the parties, and we'll continue to try to close the gaps. Upon my return, I will assess the status of the talks.

There should be no illusion about the difficult task ahead, but there should be no limit to the effort we're prepared to make. These are in fundamental ways the hardest peace issues I have ever dealt with, but the short answer to why we're still here after everybody thought we were through is that nobody wanted to give up. After all these years, as hard as these issues are, they don't want to give up. And I didn't

think we should give up, and so we're still plugging away.

But you should draw no inference from this. I will observe the news blackout on the details and will continue to do it, but this is really, really hard.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, could you say one thing about your personal involvement here, what you have invested here personally over the past 9 days, and what it was that led you to conclude that this phase of the summit is not going to pan out as you had hoped?

The President. Well, I don't know that it won't now. I think anything I would say about that would in some way or another violate the prohibitions we have had. I have respected that rigorously. I have asked the other members of the parties to do so. And I just think any characterization or description beyond what I told you—we all thought it was over, at least now that—and then we discovered that nobody wanted to quit. Nobody wanted to give up. And that should be encouraging.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 a.m. at Thurmont Elementary School prior to departure for Okinawa, Japan.